

Background Information on the 2008 Reclamation and Sustainable Mineral Development Award Winners

The ***BLM Hardrock Mineral Environmental Award*** highlights the component of sustainable development that relates to environmental stewardship. The award acknowledges operators with exceptional track records of meeting or exceeding Federal, State, or local reclamation requirements.

The ***BLM Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award*** highlights the component of sustainable development that relates to concern shown for community responsibilities and the economic benefits of mineral development, with an emphasis on successful coordination with local and regional stakeholders.

The 2008 BLM Hardrock Mineral Environmental Award winner is El Paso Corporation – Comstock Mill Site.

- The **El Paso Corporation – Comstock Mill Site** is located in Storey County, Nevada, approximately three miles southwest of Virginia City. Gold mining and milling activities have been conducted in this area since the early 1920s, culminating with the construction of the Comstock Mill in 1978. From 1979 through 1982, the Comstock Mill operated without a Plan of Operations or reclamation bond, receiving ore from area mines and extracting gold using the cyanide process. Ownership of the property changed hands several times in the course of the next two decades. The BLM repeatedly tried to bring the Comstock Mill site into compliance with mining and environmental law, and pursued reclamation of the site with the successive owners of the property. El Paso Corporation ultimately stepped forward to claim a limited liability at the Comstock Mill site because of a recent merger with a company that did have reclamation responsibility. Even though it had never operated the Comstock site, El Paso agreed to perform the mill demolition and tailings impoundment reclamation to mitigate cyanide contamination of local groundwater. El Paso demolished and removed all mill buildings, structures, and underground features at the site, regraded the tailings impoundment, capped it with clean soil, and installed a lined drainage channel designed to withstand a 100-year storm event. At the end of demolition, the 10-acre site was graded into the natural topography, covered with 2-to-5 feet of clean soil, and seeded with native species. The reclamation will help ensure protection of public safety and health and provide a final landform compatible with natural surroundings that promote revegetation. The goal is to mitigate the migration of cyanide and toxic metals from the impoundment into local groundwater. The local community of Lake County has recognized El Paso as a leader in environmental stewardship, and several BLM offices have noted El Paso Corporation's outstanding efforts and cooperative spirit on this and other similar reclamation projects.

The 2008 BLM Hardrock Mineral Community Outreach and Economic Security Award winners are The Barrick Gold Corporation – Ruby Hill Mine and Thompson Creek Mining Company.

- **The Barrick Gold Corporation – Ruby Hill Mine**, situated along Highway 50 in central Nevada, less than one mile from the town of Eureka, occupies approximately 1,500 acres of both private and BLM-managed public lands. The mine is an open-pit operation with primarily oxide material located on the Battle Mountain / Eureka mineralized trend. Ore processing includes on-site gold recovery by zero-discharge heap leach and carbon column facilities. Since the inception of the Ruby Hill Mine in the mid-1990s, the operator, Homestake Mining Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation), has designed and operated it to serve as an example to the modern gold mining industry. From initial baseline permitting efforts in 1994 through its innovative design, operation, and concurrent reclamation, Ruby Hill Mine has developed and maintained an exemplary track record of environmental stewardship and community engagement. The operator has made a particularly noteworthy effort over the years to be transparent with its mine planning and daily operations through an effective engagement process with the town of Eureka and the surrounding community, as well as Federal, State, and regional government agencies. Cooperative agency partnerships and a local citizens' advisory group instituted early in the project design phase resulted in streamlined and efficient permitting for the project. Since commencing operations in early 1997, the operator has made every effort to meet or exceed Federal and State mine and reclamation regulations and Eureka community concerns. The citizens' advisory group has continued throughout the life of the mine to ensure that local concerns are heard and addressed in a timely fashion. The operator has also been working with the community on productive post-closure uses of the mine facilities. All of these activities have occurred within a context of the mine's superb history of reclamation, mitigation, and unwavering emphasis on environmental, health, and safety awareness.
- **Thompson Creek Mining Company** mines molybdenum from a 2,500-acre site approximately 35 miles southwest of Challis, Idaho, the county seat of Custer County. Thompson Creek's project site is located on lands administered by BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Idaho Department of Lands. Operations are monitored by numerous other Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies. The company began commercial production of molybdenum in 1983. Thompson Creek Mining Company employs approximately 350 employees, spends in excess of \$40 million per year on goods and services, and produces 15-20 million pounds of molybdenum, or about 6 percent of the world's molybdenum supply. Rather than focusing on one single project, Thompson Creek has integrated the company's commitments into ongoing daily, monthly, and annual projects that are ingrained in Custer County, Challis and surrounding towns of Mackay and Salmon. Thompson Creek Mining Company is committed to ensuring the long-term economic health of the community, improving community infrastructure, assisting local organizations and providing ongoing academic and vocational opportunities for local residents. Thompson Creek's commitment to the community through funding and manpower clearly demonstrates that the company values the community's economic security, educational programs, historic preservation, youth development, and environmental protection.